

RESOLUTION

SR07-15

THE MEMBERS OF THE D.C. BOARD OF EDUCATION PRESENT THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION ON

PROPOSING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A STATE-LEVEL TASK FORCE TO ADVISE THE STATE SUPERINTENDENT ON DISCIPLINE POLICY

WHEREAS, the District of Columbia Board of Education has adopted the core belief that all children should be educated in a safe, healthy and educationally appropriate environment;

WHEREAS, disorder in schools is a legitimate threat to our instructional program;

WHEREAS, throughout the District of Columbia, teachers and students alike are concerned that disorder interferes with classroom learning and school climate;

WHEREAS, schools and school districts often prescribe a range of possible disciplinary actions that can be taken in response to student behavior, but allow latitude and discretion in assigning disciplinary action;

WHEREAS, many students receive out-of-school suspension because many of our local schools do not have the capacity to operate a “school-based or school-sponsored educational program;”

WHEREAS, as an example, in 2005, there were nearly 1,400 reported cases of suspension in the District of Columbia Public Schools, although this is likely under-representative of the true number of suspensions;

WHEREAS, the majority of suspensions occur at the elementary school level (32.9% of all suspensions in the 2005-2006 school year);

WHEREAS, nearly ninety percent of suspensions were for Level 1 Infractions, as defined by Title 5 of the DC Municipal Regulations, Chapter 25, as “causing disruption” or “failure to comply with directions,” respectively, both of which are generally minor offenses that may be addressed through other school-based interventions.

WHEREAS, it has been reported that other schools in the District of Columbia utilize out-of-school suspension as a disciplinary measure;

WHEREAS, researchers believe that out-of-school suspension is ineffective and possibly detrimental to students since students may lack of supervision and lose learning time, while increasing a student’s likelihood of dropping out of school;

WHEREAS, in-school suspension (ISS) are in-school programs to which a student may be assigned for a specified period in lieu of out-of-school suspension which provide short-term

consequences for misbehavior and avoidance of many of the negative, long-term effects of out-of-school suspension;

WHEREAS, misbehavior is caused by in-school and out-of-school factors, socioeconomic factors, and environmental factors — all of which need to be addressed in a comprehensive fashion;

WHEREAS, research suggests that well-functioning ISS programs are not solely “holding tanks” — but rather offer an opportunity to address the multiple causes of behavioral problems and thus modify student behavior;

WHEREAS, ISS programs should be only one component of a system-wide strategy for creating and sustaining a positive and nurturing school climate. It must be supported by a continuum of “wraparound” services that provide support for students and their parents in their out of school time;

WHEREAS, it is crucial that we create interagency links to ensure a full continuum of support within an alternative setting for students with special education needs and provision of mental health services and supports to address emotional and developmental needs;

WHEREAS, a “integrated service model” for in-school suspension may be a building block to building community schools that offer more comprehensive services for the larger community;

WHEREAS, the Board of Education hopes to collaborate with pertinent stakeholders, including the Deputy Mayor for Education and members of the Interagency Collaboration and Integrated Services Commission to promote change;

WHEREAS, that the most appropriate and feasible way of addressing these issues is through the creation of a task force that includes these various stakeholders;

BE IT RESOLVED, the District of Columbia Board of Education proposes the establishment a state-level task force to advise the State Superintendent on disciplinary policies to ensure that disciplinary actions are applied appropriately, consistently, and fairly and to work towards building an integrated service model to address our students’ complex, interrelated problems enabling every student to receive an outstanding education within a safe, healthy, and educationally appropriate environment.

June 6, 2007

Date Adopted



Attest